



Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Elliptical Road, Diliman
1100 Quezon City

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No: 12

Series of 2023

SUBJECT: DECLARATION OF SOUTH COTABATO AS AVIAN INFLUENZA FREE PROVINCE

WHEREAS, the Province of South Cotabato had recorded four (4) confirmed cases of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) Subtype H5N1 which were confirmed through laboratory testing using RT-PCR. The three (3) cases were detected in the Municipality of Santo Niño on March 31, May 11 and May 12, 2022 affecting native chickens and ducks. On September 8, presence of infection with Avian Influenza virus was detected in the Municipality of Tantangan and this affected a commercial chicken layer farm;

WHEREAS, upon detection of the disease, the Provincial Government of South Cotabato and the Municipalities of Santo Niño and Tantangan, in coordination with Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office XII (DA RFO XII) and the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), conducted disease investigation, immediate depopulation, cleaning and disinfection, movement restrictions and surveillance in the affected premises following the Avian Influenza Protection Program (AIPP) guidelines;

WHEREAS, continued disease monitoring and surveillance in the 1-km and 7-km surveillance zones surrounding the affected farms yielded negative test results for influenza type A virus;

WHEREAS, Article 10.4.6. of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE), Terrestrial Animal Health Code (2021) provides that the Avian Influenza free status of a previously free country or zone may be regained after a minimum period of 28 days after a stamping-out policy has been completed; disinfection of the last affected establishment was carried out and that consequent surveillance demonstrated the absence of infection;

WHEREAS, prior to the confirmation of the first case of HPAI H5N1 in South Cotabato, the province had been free from avian influenza in poultry and through the joint efforts of the LGU, DARFO, and BAI applying effective disease control measures such as stamping out, cleaning and disinfection operations, biosecurity and other quarantine activities, the risk of further spread from infected premises were effected without delay;

WHEREAS, more than ninety (90) days have elapsed since the end of the cleaning and disinfection operations and that surveillance activities yielded negative AI test results;

NOW THEREFORE, I, DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN, Senior Undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture, in accordance with the authority vested in me, do hereby declare South Cotabato as Avian Influenza Free Province.

Done this 10th of March 2023.

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Senior Undersecretary



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